UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/52/961
S/1998/543
19 June 1998

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda item 61
QUESTION OF CYPRUS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Identical letters dated 18 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

With a letter dated 28 January 1998 (A/52/779-S/1998/81) addressed to you, my predecessor conveyed the grave concern of my Government regarding the Greek/Greek Cypriot military preparations in Cyprus.

In particular, attention was drawn to the danger posed by the construction of a military airbase and the possible deployment of Greek combat aircraft in Paphos, and to the fact that, coupled with the Greek Cypriot intention to deploy the S-300 missile system in Southern Cyprus, these actions were bringing the parties to the threshold of a crisis.

I regret to inform you that, in the past few days, Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration have taken the military steps we have warned about.

Following the completion of the military base in Paphos, four Greek fighter aircraft and a C-130 transport airplane landed there on 16 June 1998. This is the first time Greek military aircraft are being deployed in Southern Cyprus outside of a military exercise. The Greek Cypriot spokesman has stated that the Greek aircraft are using the Paphos military airbase within the framework of the "joint military doctrine" initiated in 1993 between Greece and the Greek Cypriot administration.

Turkey views this as an extremely serious and provocative development. As a guarantor Power, Turkey has protested these actions, which challenge the stability of and increase tension on the island and in the region.

In this respect, I would like to point out that no air force exists on the island and that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus has no airbase. Therefore, the Paphos military airbase brought into service for use by the Greek

military aircraft cannot be said to have a defensive purpose. This airbase constitutes a threat to the security of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in particular and to the equilibrium in the eastern Mediterranean in general. It cannot be viewed in isolation either. It has to be evaluated in the light of the attempts of the Greek/Greek Cypriot front to implement the so-called "joint military doctrine" through an excessive arms build-up, including the insistence, despite international protest, to deploy the S-300 missile system and the increasingly offensive nature of their military posture.

Given these developments it cannot but be perceived that the Greek/Greek Cypriot side is seriously considering resorting to the military option in Cyprus once again. It should be recalled that the Greek/Greek Cypriot side tried the military option in the years 1963, 1967 and 1974 and failed. Unfortunately, their previous failures are no guarantee that they will not resort to this method once again.

Therefore, my Government would like to ask for your intervention in preventing the attempts of the Greek/Greek Cypriot side aimed at undermining security and stability in Cyprus and in the region. I would also like to reiterate that my Government reserves the right to take the measures it deems appropriate to safeguard its own security as well as that of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I would like to request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volkan VURAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative